

DANIEL K. INOUE  
HAWAII

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,  
CHAIRMAN  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE,  
CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND COORDINATION  
COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

## United States Senate

SUITE 722, HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1102  
(202) 224-3934  
FAX (202) 224-6747

PRINCE KUHIU FEDERAL BUILDING  
ROOM 7-212, 300 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD  
HONOLULU, HI 96850-4975  
(808) 541-2542  
FAX (808) 541-2549

101 AUPUNI STREET, NO. 205  
HILO, HI 96720-4221  
(808) 935-0844  
FAX (808) 961-5163

June 21, 2010

**The Honorable Julius Genachowski**  
**Chairman**  
**Federal Communications Commission**  
**445 12th Street, S.W.**  
**Washington, D.C. 20554**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I wish to share with you some concerns about the proceeding before the Federal Communications Commission regarding the rate plan for Video Relay Service (VRS). VRS is a broadband-based relay service that enables my deaf constituents to communicate in real time in American Sign Language. In addition to being a critically important service, VRS is also driving broadband adoption among the deaf, where broadband adoption has otherwise lagged.

Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that the FCC promote efficiency, improved technology, nationwide access, and functional equivalence for the deaf. Many of my constituents are concerned that the proposals being considered by the Commission would roll back progress toward functional equivalence and would negatively affect the ability of deaf consumers to access VRS. It is essential that the Commission establish a fair and predictable VRS rate that promotes the goals of the ADA and encourages innovation and advancement in communications services for the deaf.

Aloha,



DANIEL K. INOUE  
United States Senator

DKI:mc

*CAB*  
*Policy*  
*IPV*  
*JE*  
*11/26*

12 JUL 2010 RCUD



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

August 5, 2010

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Unites States Senate  
722 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Inouye

Thank you for your letter regarding the reimbursement rate for Video Relay Service (VRS). I share your support for VRS, which has become a critical communications tool for many who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On June 28, 2010, the Commission unanimously adopted two items to address immediate and long-term approaches for sustaining the vital Telecommunications Relay Services, of which VRS is one form. In an *Order*, the Commission sets interim VRS rates for the July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 period at \$6.2390 for Tier I, \$6.2335 for Tier II, and \$5.0668 for Tier III. These rates represent the average of the current tiered rates and NECA's proposed rates based on actual, historical costs. The *Order* notes that these rates also reflect a balance between the goal of ensuring that VRS providers recover from the VRS Fund only the reasonable costs caused by their provision of VRS and the goal of ensuring quality and sufficient service during a one-year period.

The other item adopted on June 28 is a *Notice of Inquiry* to take a fresh look at the VRS rules with an eye to ensuring that this vital program remains effective, efficient, and sustainable in the future. The *Notice* poses questions that delve into many cost and reimbursement related issues, seeking to make the program less susceptible to the waste, fraud, and abuse that have plagued the current program. Bringing clarity and predictability to VRS compensation is high on the Commission's list of priorities, and we will resolve this proceeding as expeditiously as possible. I am enclosing a copy of the Commission's News Release for your information.

I appreciate your continuing interest in this very important matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski